

1915.
NEW ZEALAND.

DRAINAGE OPERATIONS IN HAURAKI PLAINS :

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1915; TOGETHER WITH STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 10 of the Hauraki Plains
Act, 1908.*

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st June, 1915.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report on the drainage operations in the Hauraki Plains for the past year in accordance with the provisions of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908.

During the past year some 6,444 acres were subdivided into sixty-seven farms, &c., the valuation of same amounting to £65,601, making a total of 38,994 acres, valued at £243,851, now drained, settled, and revenue-producing. There are some 294 settlers in possession. I am advised that probably only a very small area will be ready for settlement during the coming year, as the schemes of roading and drainage are each year becoming more difficult. However, development is being actively carried on.

The total expenditure under the Act has now been as follows:—

				£	s.	d.
For the year ended 31st March, 1908	...	...	...	5,070	0	0
„ „ 1909	...	...	...	11,672	5	6
„ „ 1910	...	...	...	22,235	2	11
„ „ 1911	...	...	...	32,103	14	0
„ „ 1912	...	...	...	40,084	13	1
„ „ 1913	...	...	...	26,608	1	3
„ „ 1914	...	...	...	21,467	18	2
„ „ 1915	...	...	...	20,399	10	4
Total	...	...	...	£179,641	5	3

Quite recently I made a comprehensive inspection of the Hauraki Plains, visiting both the settled country and also that under development. I also visited the works and operations in progress. The settlers have made great headway, and many of the farms are looking like old-established places. I feel assured that the Hauraki Plains will mean much to the produce of the Dominion in the future, as without doubt it does at the present time. I particularly noted that the officers of the Land Drainage Branch were, wherever possible, doing everything they could to help the settlers, and generally I am of opinion that their interests are well looked after by this Department. As is also the case with the other big reclamation scheme (Rangitaiki Plains), the various works are being economically administered, and the dredgers are quite a feature in both instances.

As it is about nine years since I visited the plains, and as the gross area affected by the drainage is about 90,000 acres, the whole inspection was a revelation to me. From being then a dismal swamp, looked upon as practically undrainable, it has changed into a prosperous farming district, with comfortable farm homesteads, and with schools coming into view. My remarks regarding the Rangitaiki Plains administration apply equally in this case. The Chief Drainage Engineer, Mr. J. B. Thompson, is in charge, whilst his chief assistant for the works is Mr. R. G. MacMorran, who takes local control of engineering and land surveys, as also the drainage and road-construction works. I am satisfied that everything is proceeding satisfactorily, and that both officers and men are pulling well together. I am retiring shortly